

Research Article

**Livelihood Strategies of the Poor During the Covid-19 Pandemic:
A Study on Service Sector Workers**

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ABSTRACT

The study examines the kinds of strategies the poor in the service sector who lost their jobs or took a break due to the Covid-19 pandemic have developed to cope with the pandemic. The study further aims to reveal the ways or strategies the poor resort to protect themselves from the adverse effects of the pandemic. The studies conducted on Covid-19 have shown that the poor are more negatively affected by the epidemic. The poor here denotes the groups belonging to relative poverty. The study mainly focuses on vulnerable sectors, such as service sector workers, who have a higher risk of being pushed into insecurity during the Covid-19 pandemic. They are all labelled as 'relatively poor' to avoid uncertainty and unusual circumstances. The qualitative research design employs in-depth interviews as a data collection tool. The participants comprised 15 service sector workers who lost their jobs or took a break due to the Covid-19 pandemic. They all live in Elazığ in Turkey. The study results show that the service sector workers constitute the most crowded part of the disadvantaged groups. They are the most vulnerable and unprotected groups during the Covid-19 pandemic, irrespective of whether they are poor or at risk of impoverishment. They have developed livelihood strategies to cope with the impacts of the pandemic. Among these are more frequent relations with the countryside compared to the past, the increase in the role of women in the household, the increase in social benefits, and the reduction in consumption and borrowing. One more thing in the study is household size. While the household size was a vital livelihood strategy before the epidemic, it lost its importance with the epidemic.

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